

Monster

by cassowary

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Summary: A little oneshot of Harada Sanosuke's early life in Matsuyama. An exploration of his motives, if you will. Feel free to read and review at your leisure!

Monster

Author's Note: This short story was inspired by the fact that yours truly always thought Harada Sanosuke from Hakuouki always looked a little..._girly_. His face, that is. The author attempted to be as historically accurate as possible (with minimal research). As a result, in this story, he has an older brother, but chances are that in real life, that older brother was _not_ named Tsujimaru. Apologies. But, on the flipside, chances are that the real Harada Sanosuke looked nothing like the one in Hakuouki, and the real Hijikata Toshizou was never too keen on drinking demon blood. That said, try to enjoy!

Matsuyama, 1852.

The weather was warm and beautiful. Farmers worked in the fields, merchants at their kiosks with fresh fish and vegetables and bright kimonos. Children helped their parents, or played in the streets.

And one Harada Sanosuke was in a foul mood.

"Come on, Sano," his older brother Tsujimaru snapped, brandishing his homemade bokken in frustration.

"You're using your sword like a spear, but you're just being stupidâ€"you don't have the range. How are you ever going to learn kenjutsu like_ that_?"

Sanosuke spat on the ground, his own rough bokken clenched in a small fist.

"Shut up, Tsuji!"

Tsuji wasn't ready for the lateral piece of wood that hit him in the stomach, thrown like a spear. He doubled over in pain, the wind knocked out of him.

"Youâ€"littleâ€" Tsuji gasped at his younger brother, clutching his belly.

"Maybe I don't _wanna_ use a sword!" Sanosuke shouted at nobody in particular.

"Maybe I'm not really a bushi! So _what _if I'm not like everyone else?"

Tsujimaru's brown eyes suddenly glared ferociously from his bent-over position.

"Sano," he growled, "You _aren't_ like everybody else. So that's why you havta be a _real_ bushi, not some stupid sword-swingin' snob..."

He cut himself off abruptly at the sight of tears in the kid's golden eyes, his odd little eyebrows crinkled up as if he were fighting off tears.

"B-but," Sanosuke said huskily, trying to act tough despite himself, "You said I was stupid. And I look weird. And those bastards tease me for looking likeâ€" he rubbed his eyes quickly, "a g-_girl_."

Tsuji couldn't help but laugh at the sight of his little brother sniffing and glaring daggers.

"Now you're _really_ being stupid, Sano. You're a natural fighter, you just have to learn the technique. And if you practice enough, you'll grow up big and strong. I mean, you're a Harada, so of _course_ you'll be a monster. And anyway," Tsuji added with a sly wink, "I be when you're older, the women will be falling all over you for your _lovely_ red hair."

The killing look became suddenly hopeful.

"You mean, the _pretty_ ones, too?"

"Yep."

In the evening, their father came home from his shift at the castle, surprised to find his second son diligently practicing with his wooden sword as Tsuji watched calmly from their small porch.

"Tsujimaru, what in hell's gotten into Sanosuke?" he asked his oldest son in wonder. Tsuji grinned.

"Dad," he laughed, "I think I've just created a monster."

End
file.